

VA Portland Health Care System

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Produced by the VAPORHCS
 Public Affairs Office

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS ??

Please email us at...

VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov

or call 503-402-2975

Lincoln's Promise (VA Mission Statement)

"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

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For **VAPORHCS Events and Classes**—got to the VAPORHCS Web page...
www.portland.va.gov/calendar.asp

Message from the Director



Michael W. Fisher
 Director, VA Portland Health Care System

September is **Suicide Prevention Month**.

The goal of this annual initiative is to promote resources and awareness around the issue of suicide prevention as well inform people in **how we all can help** those struggling with this horrific issue. Suicide afflicts Veterans at near epidemic proportions - 20 Veteran suicides per day nationally - and it is an unacceptable crisis in our Veterans' lives that is preventable. With that, it is imperative that we all know and do all we can to stop it. Please, [click on this link to see how YOU can make a difference](#).

VAPORHCS is extremely fortunate to have a team of dedicated professionals who provide their expertise, insight, and commitment to suicide prevention to approximately 800 Veterans in crisis every quarter through consults, referrals and direct calls. Our 5-person Suicide Prevention Team provides education, consultation and support to Veterans and to family members, friends, VAPORHCS

staff, other hospitals, and the community at large. The team does multiple outreach events every month as well as monitors high-risk flagged patients and tracks suicidal behavior of our Veterans throughout our entire health care system. They are making a real difference in saving lives and families. You can to. Remember, suicide prevention is everyone's business.

This year VA's theme for Suicide Prevention Month is Be There. It emphasizes how small, thoughtful acts — calling up an old friend, checking in on a neighbor, cooking someone dinner, or inviting a colleague on a walk — can have a big impact on people who could use some support.

Please feel free to reach out to our Suicide Prevention Team for information, training and support. You can contact them at Team Line at 503-402-2857, or Ext. 52857 or through our Public Affairs Office at VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov

Thank you for your support and letting us serve you.

Michael Fisher

VA Veterans Town Hall & Claims Clinic — Sept. 24, Vancouver VA

FOR WHO? Veterans, family members

WHEN? Saturday, Sep. 24, 2016, Claims clinic starts at 10 a.m., Town Hall is 10:30 a.m.—noon

WHERE? VAPORHCS Vancouver Campus, 1601 E. 4th Plain Blvd., Bldg. 11, Columbia Rm.

WHAT? Director, VAPORHCS, & Director, Portland Regional Office, share information, answer questions and address concerns. Claims specialists will be on hand to address claim questions.

If you have any questions, please contact the Public Affairs Office at

VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov or (503)402-2975

September is Suicide Prevention Month

By Phillip Myers

Public Affairs Volunteer

An average of 20 Veterans a day died from suicide in 2014 in the United States, according to an extensive [analysis of Veteran suicide rates conducted by the VA](#). With that being said, Suicide Prevention Month takes on an incredibly important role as a tool to help educate our society so we all know and do all we can to stop it.

VA Portland Health Care System has a team of suicide prevention staff who play a key role in responding to Veterans in crisis including those who call the [Veterans Crisis Line](#). The Portland VA Suicide Prevention Team provides consultation and training to all staff within the health care system and supports the belief that suicide prevention is a public health problem that everyone can help to end.

Veterans in crisis or need of support

can call the

Veterans Crisis Line at

1-800-273-8255 and press "1"

for Veterans or **send a text to 8255**

or chat online with a responder at

www.veteranscrisisline.net

"The Portland VA has one of the highest number of consults from the Veterans Crisis Line across the VA," said Aimee Johnson, Lead Suicide Prevention Coordinator. "We currently have a staff of two full-time and one half-time employees who respond to an average

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH



Your actions

could save a life.

Showing you care can make a big difference to someone in crisis.

VeteransCrisisLine.net



of five to sixteen consults per day."

According to Aimee, VAPORHCS recently hired three more full-time Suicide Prevention Coordinators who will be at various locations in our health care system including the Salem, Bend and the Fairview VA clinics. Their team also has a half-time Program Support Assistant who supports the outpatient mental health clinic in Portland.

When a Veteran or their family member calls the 1-800-273-8255 phone number and presses "1," their call gets routed to the VA crisis line responders at the Canandaigua VA or to one of four back-up call centers located throughout the country. The crisis gets handled in real time with a consult or referral placed to the local VA Suicide Prevention Team for follow-up the next business day.

A [July 7, 2016 VA news release](#) stated that "The VA has implemented several comprehensive, broad ranging suicide prevention initiatives, including a toll-free Veterans Crisis Line, placement of Suicide Prevention Coordinators at all VA Medical Centers and large outpatient facilities, and improvements in case management and tracking."

Since its launch in 2007, VA-wide, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered nearly 2.2 million calls and initiated the dispatch of emergency services to callers in crisis over 58,000 times. During the period from October, 2015, through May, 2016, VAPORHCS received 935 referrals

(Con't on next page)

Suicide Prevention (Con't from page 2)

from the Veterans Crisis Line.

“We try to make suicide prevention everyone’s business,” said Aimee. “There are several recognizable warning signs that indicate suicidal threats. Those include social isolation, increase in alcohol consumption or drug use, feeling like a burden, thwarted belongingness, talking about life ‘being over’, giving belongings away, or feelings of extreme despondency.”

Veterans who have a suicidal crisis or are simply having serious concerns about their mental health can receive at the VA a comprehensive suicidal risk assessment, subsequent referrals for counseling, and other mental health treatment and counseling. They are then guided through a safety plan that engages the Veteran in preventive measures.

Another organization also helping Veterans in need, is Lines for Life, a Portland-based non-profit dedicated to preventing substance abuse and suicide. This organization offers free, anonymous assistance to active duty service members, Veterans and their families through telephone and text support.

Stacy Hamar, who is the supervisor of telephone operators at VAPORHCS, is an avid supporter (and a volunteer call worker) at Lines for Life. Lines for Life is one of the four back-up call centers for the Veterans Crisis Line. Lines for Life also supports Oregon state-run programs such as the Oregon Helpline for alcohol and drug abuse, Oregon Suicide helpline, and The Oregon Youthline for teens who are in crisis. They also serve as an overflow center for various Oregon based organizations.

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Stacy, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps as an intelligence analyst, says that Lines for Life serves as an important adjunct to the Veterans Crisis Line and that

they actively promote that resource when they receive calls on the military Helpline.

Lines for Life provides a 56-hour volunteer training program for all volunteers who work on their phone lines. The organization familiarizes its call center people with special problems that might be presented by Veterans who require assistance.

One of the most important aspects of Veteran suicide prevention and counseling is providing contact information for those who need help provided by experienced, concerned VA trained employees and from a

variety of organizations such as Lines for Life.

One phone call might make a huge difference in saving a life.

The Dalles VA Clinic is renamed after resident of The Dalles Medal of Honor recipient

Approved unanimously by Congress, a Bill proposed to rename The Dalles VA Clinic to the **Loren R. Kaufman VA Clinic** was signed into law by the President on June 22, 2016. This will be the first VAPORHCS facility to be named after a Veteran or any person. The only way a VA facility can be renamed like this is by Congress.



The Dalles VA Clinic to be re-named formally in a ceremony on Oct. 1 at 10:30 a.m. at The Dalles Oregon Veterans Home.

Sgt. 1st Class Kaufman Loren R. Kaufman was a soldier in the Army during the Korean War. He received the Medal of Honor for his actions on September 4, and September 5, 1950. He was later killed in action before



Born 7/27/23
in The Dalles, OR
Died 2/12/51
Near Yongsan, Korea



Sgt. 1st Class
Loren R.
Kaufman

being awarded the Medal of Honor and is buried at Willamette National Cemetery.

The Mid-Columbia Veterans Memorial Committee proposed the name change to Oregon congressional members who then proposed the bill for approval by Congress.

On Oct. 1 at 10:30 a.m. at The Dalles Oregon Veterans Home, a ceremony co-hosted by the Mid-Columbia Veterans Memorial Committee and the VA Portland Health Care System will honor the service and sacrifice of Sgt. 1st Class Kaufman formally renaming The Dalles VA Clinic in his name.

Please join us for this event with Oregon's congressional leaders, The Dalles community leaders, Veterans Affairs leadership, and veterans from across the area to honor this born and raised The Dalles Veteran who exemplified courage and selflessness throughout his service to our country.

You can share this event and share your comments about this via the [VA Portland Facebook event page](#).

We hope to see you there.

Welcome Home event at zoo a success

About 1,900 people participated in the VAPORHCS Welcome Home event for Veterans and their families at the Oregon Zoo on Sept. 18, 2016. The event was sponsored by the VAPORHCS Transition and Care Management (TCM) team. Thank you to our partner organizations and volunteers who supported the event. Click here for more photos and information on our [Facebook page](#).



New Vietnam Memorial to be unveiled and dedicated & ALL Vietnam-era Veterans to be honored at Vancouver Campus Oct. 15 starting at 10 a.m.



An artist rendering of the new Vietnam Memorial to be unveiled and dedicated on Oct. 1 at the Vancouver VA Campus Vietnam Memorial Gardens. The names of 59 Clark County service members who lost their lives in county during the war will be on the memorial. [See more details on Facebook.](#)

VIETNAM VETERAN LAPEL PIN



Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin (Front)



Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin (Back)

This is an image of the lapel pins to be presented to all Vietnam era Veterans during the Oct. 1 ceremony. Eligible Veterans are those living US Veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces any time from Nov. 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location.

Please join the Vancouver Community Military Appreciation Committee (CMAC) and VAPORHCS for the unveiling and dedication of the new Vietnam Memorial Monument at the Vietnam War Memorial Garden on the Vancouver VA campus on Oct. 1. As part of this event, all Vietnam era Veterans will be honored and presented a Vietnam Veteran lapel pin. This part of the event is connected to the [Department of Defense 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration program.](#)

This new Vietnam Memorial was first conceived in the 1990's by the Vancouver

Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America. At the time, a site secure from vandalism and theft of the plaques could not be identified. Recently, VAPORHCS gained permission to build the monument in the Vietnam Memorial Gardens on the VA campus.

This new memorial, while it honors all Vietnam Veterans,



it will have 59 plaques with the names Clark County veterans who died in Vietnam during the war. These war heroes' names are mounted on stone monuments under the Huey helicopter in the gardens.

Featured speakers event will be Jerilyn Brusseau and Rae Cheney, the sister and mother of U.S. Army 1st Lt. Daniel Cheney, one of the Clark County soldiers who was killed in Vietnam and listed on the new memorial.

A reception will start at 10 a.m. in the VA gymnasium located directly across the from the ceremony in the Vietnam Memorial Gardens. There will be light refreshments and organizations providing information for Veterans. **The ceremony starts at 11 a.m.**

“Freedom’s Path” facility for homeless opens on Vancouver Campus

A formal ribbon cutting event was held Sept. 21 at the new Freedom’s Path facility on the Vancouver VA Campus where the 50-unit complex for homeless and at risk of being homeless Veterans is located. Approximately 70 people attended the event celebrating the opening of the latest facility to open in Clark County to help get people off the streets and into permanent housing.



A group performs for ceremonial ribbon cutting on Sept. 21 for the new Freedom’s Path facility on the Vancouver Campus.

Air Force Veteran Karl Colbert, a tenant of one of the new one-bedroom apartments in the facility spoke to the group about what it means to him. “After the door closed behind me the first time in my new home about two weeks ago, I no longer felt homeless or helpless. I looked at those bare walls as a canvas for a new way to start my life,” said Karl.

VAPORHCS provides, on site, a VA social worker for case work support and a peer support specialist for the

Veterans at the facility. A third party, Communities for Veterans, was contracted by the VA to build and manage the facility. Forty Veterans were moved in as of the day of the ceremony and the remaining 10 future tenants have been selected and should be in their new homes soon.



Air Force Veteran Karl Colbert, a new tenant of Freedom’s Path spoke during the ceremony there on Sept. 21.

Blue Star Marker is dedicated at Fairview clinic

A Blue Star Marker was dedicated during a ceremony on Sept. 9 at the Fairview VA Clinic with about 90 guests and VA staff present. The Oregon State Federation of Garden Clubs Fairview Blue Star Marker Committee of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. donated the marker that honors all men and women that serve in the United States Armed Services. This is the third such marker at VAPORHCS facilities (the Portland and Vancouver facilities each have one) and the 78th such marker in the state of Oregon. See our [Facebook page](#) for more photos.

